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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 002429

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STATE FOR SRAP HOLBROOKE, SCA/FO, SCA/FO  
USAID FOR ASIA/SCAA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: BAMYAN LIKELY TO VOTE ALONG ETHNIC LINES BUT  
ISSUES ALSO AT PLAY

REF: 09 KABUL 1593

Classified By: Deputy Coordinator for Interagency Provincial  
Affairs Hoyt Yee, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (c)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The overwhelming majority of Bamyan's Hazara population is expected to support President Karzai, with the balance favoring Hazara candidate Bashardost. The Tajik minority is expected to support Abdullah. Most observers believe Karzai will win the vote in Bamyan because most Hazaras will honor their leaders' call to vote for the incumbent, not because he is popular. The Provincial Council (PC) campaign has been spirited and based largely on issues, not ethnicity. All of Bamyan's 166 voting centers will be open on August 20 and election security coordination has been excellent. Nonetheless, security concerns for Election Day do exist, especially in the wake of the arrest of Mullah Borhan in the Gandak Valley of Shebar province, and Pashtun Taliban and other insurgents remain active in this area. Finally, Governor Sarobi has made clear her wish to return to Kabul to pursue a senior level job in the new administration. END SUMMARY.

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Bamyan Presidential Vote Ethnically Split  
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¶2. (SBU) The population of Bamyan province is roughly 80 percent Hazara and 20 percent Tajik. Political leaders believe that the majority of Hazara voters -- estimates range between 60-80 percent -- will back President Karzai while the remainder are likely to vote for the Hazara political outlier Bashardost. The Tajik minority, located in the districts of Shebar and Kahmard, are seen to firmly back former foreign minister Abdullah. While most Hazara will vote for Karzai, they are doing so out of loyalty to Hazara leaders aligned with Karzai like Kalili and Mohaqeq. This "a vote for Karzai is a vote for me" message was very clear during Kalili's August 16 rally in Bamyan when Kalili spent several minutes reminding the audience of his own connection to Bamyan. In casual conversations with Bamyan's citizens, it is quite obvious that Karzai's personal popularity has fallen substantially since the 2004 elections, as many believe that his administration is corrupt and that he has failed to deliver on his promises of development for the broader Hazarjat region.

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Provincial Council Campaign -- Democracy in Action  
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¶3. (U) While the population has largely aligned itself by ethnicity behind the presidential candidates, the PC campaign is alive and well. There are 94 candidates (six of whom are women) running for the Council's nine seats. Three of the seats are reserved for female members. Campaign posters adorn the walls of even the smallest and poorest

areas and candidates are out campaigning every day. Even the incumbents are working around the clock to ensure their re-election. Unlike their presidential counterparts, some of the PC candidates seem to be effectively breaking through both ethnic and gender barriers, making the campaign very interesting as residents appear to be listening to the messages, not relying on ethnicity. In a recent conversation with a Tajik female incumbent, she proudly recounted how she had been able to win the support of the Mullah community in Bamyan, s most conservative area, the Tajik-dominated Du Abe valley near the Baghlan border. When asked how she had won their support, she stressed that she had made no promises to build roads or schools, but, rather, to represent the real needs and interests of the community.

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Security Coordination is Excellent, but Concerns Remain  
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¶4. (SBU) Although initially slow and frustrating, the coordination and effectiveness of the OCCP has improved greatly over the past three weeks, since the center was established. In daily meetings, the PRT and New Zealand Police have mentored and coached the spell these out the first time ANSF, IEC, NDS, and other players to work together, to plan effectively, and to anticipate potential problems. These efforts have paid off in several ways. Two weeks ago, the OCCP was instrumental in coordinating rapid police response when the DSG and CoP from Shebar District came under IED and small arms attack along the Gandak highway. Through its quick response, police were able to put enough officers on the scene to capture Mullah Borhan, the Taliban's

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shadow governor for Bamyan, who remains in NDS custody in Kabul. The OCCP's good coordination also ensured that all police were dispatched to their assigned voting centers five days before the elections and that the distribution of sensitive voting materials under police escort is proceeding according to plan. On Election Day, all 166 voting centers and 412 voting booths are expected to be open. Each center will have three to four ANP officers.

¶5. (C) Despite the success of the OCCP, security concerns remain in the Gandak Valley of Shebar Province, the area in which Borhan was apprehended. His co-attackers escaped and residents in the area have reported a steady flow of activity in the region. In the days following the attack, an AKDN health clinic in Gandak received several night letters, prompting AKDN to temporarily close the facility. Initial rumors about the clinic's closing described its employees as fleeing in panic, a rumor quickly dispelled by AKDN's Bamyan director. However, based on this rumor, IEC officials refused to visit the region and threatened to close six voting centers because they could not be visited and confirmed by the IEC. To prove that the region was still safe, at least 15 elders from the region came to Bamyan city and offered to escort the IEC to Shebar to inspect the centers under their and ANP supervision. As a result, the IEC visited and approved the centers.

¶6. (SBU) In addition, a recent delegation of 14 leaders from Shebar met with Karzai to petition Borhan's release. They reportedly threatened to disrupt elections if he were not immediately released. While most of Bamyan's residents who knew of Borhan's reputation were pleased with his arrest, subsequent New Zealand PRT patrols in Shebar have met with increasing suspicion and hostility from residents. On a recent visit, one youth reportedly tore up and spit on a news pamphlet the PRT regularly produces and distributes to educate residents about PRT projects in the region.

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Governor Sarobi Kabul-bound - She Hopes  
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17. (C) Although she remains tight-lipped about her future plans, Gov. Sarobi has told the DOS PRT officer on several occasions that she does not plan to stay in Bamyan, and that she is seeking a "senior level job" in the new administration. When asked specifically about which post, she indicated an interest in MRRD to "continue Afghanistan's development," but added that she "must wait and see what develops." Despite her political ambitions, Sarobi appears to have kept her distance from the Karzai campaign. She did spend some time with Kalili, although it is not clear if she appeared in public with him.  
EIKENBERRY